

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of:

Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees)
For Fiscal Year 2019) MB Docket No. 19-105

**COMMENTS OF THE MULTICULTURAL MEDIA, TELECOM AND INTERNET COUNCIL
AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK OWNED BROADCASTERS**

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (“MMTC”) and the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (“NABOB”)¹ respectfully submit these Comments in response to the August 27, 2019 Report and Order and Further NPRM (“R&O and Further NPRM”).² Therein the Commission stated:

[W]e seek comment on whether we should adopt a lower regulatory fee for full-service AM and FM broadcast radio station incubator licensees. The Commission’s broadcast incubator program is intended to create ownership opportunities for new entrants that are small businesses and promote competition and diversity in the radio broadcast industry. MMTC asserts that regulatory fees may make it more difficult for the incubator stations to thrive, and the Commission should exempt them from regulatory fees for the term of the license. Commenters should discuss an appropriate reduction from the regulatory fee for broadcasters, such as 50%.³

In the Comments we filed at the initial R&O stage of this proceeding, we explained:

New entrants and small broadcasters often face significant difficulties in accessing the capital needed to purchase broadcast stations in the secondary market, participate in Commission broadcast auctions for new construction permits, and remain competitive...additional financial obligations, such as regulatory fees, may render it more difficult for incubated entities to thrive under the program.⁴

¹ The views expressed in these Comments are the institutional views of MMTC and NABOB, and are not intended to reflect the individual views of each officer, director or member of these organizations.

² *Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2019, MD Docket No. 19-105*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 19-83 (August 27, 2019); *see also* 84 Fed. Reg. 50890 (September 26, 2019).

³ *Id.* at 27 ¶69 (fns. omitted).

⁴ MMTC/NABOB Comments in Response to NOI, filed June 6, 2019, at 1.

Consequently, we proposed that the Commission exempt incubated stations from payment of regulatory fees for the full eight-year term of the license in which their incubation period is contained.⁵

The R&O and Further NPRM asks commenters to “discuss an appropriate reduction from the regulatory fee for broadcasters, such as 50%.”⁶ The R&O and Further NPRM is silent on the reason for an “appropriate reduction” in the fee, and we cannot conceive of any reason why only a partial fee reduction would be justified. In our experience, broadcasters generally need strong financial incentives to participate in FCC diversity initiatives. A waiver of all fees for a license period would profoundly demonstrate the Commission’s endorsement of incubation and create a powerful incentive for it. As we demonstrated in our June 6, 2019 Comments, the dollar amounts of regulatory fees for an eight-year license term are meaningful, but are not so large as to materially diminish the Commission’s ability to fund its operations.⁷ Thus, the Commission should adopt the MMTC/NABOB proposal as filed.

Respectfully submitted,

David Honig

David Honig
President Emeritus and Senior Advisor
Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council
1919 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Suite 725
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 332-0500
dhonig@mmtconline.org

James L. Winston

James L. Winston
President and CEO
National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, Inc.
1201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 463-8970
jwinston@nabob.org

October 21, 2019

⁵ *Id.* at 2.

⁶ R&O and FNPRM at 27 ¶69.

⁷ MMTC/NABOB Comments, filed June 6, 2019, at 2-3.